

**WEEKLY INFORMATION PACKET
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Mayor Toor and City Council

FROM: Frank W. Bruno, City Manager
Peter Pollock, Planning Director

DATE: April 15, 2004

SUBJECT: **Information Item:** Summary of the history of the Valmont Butte proposals.

Below is an excerpt from the March 16, 2004 City Council memo on the Valmont Butte proposals summarizing the history of the projects. The information on the construction cost of the Biosolids Recycling Center has been updated to reflect current estimates. This information was requested at the April 8, 2004 Council meeting.

What steps have already been taken concerning the fire training center, the biosolids recycling center, and the Valmont Butte site?

Fire Training Center

The Boulder Regional Fire Training Center Board was formed in 1974 through a cooperative agreement with the City of Boulder and Boulder County. The current three-acre fire training center site on Lee Hill Road was provided by Boulder County. The City of Boulder funded construction of the burn building, tower and other training "props." The Boulder Valley School District provides temporary classroom buildings at the site.

In November of 1996 the City of Boulder Fire Department Master Plan was approved by City Council. One of the plan recommendations identified the need to move and expand the training center. The next year, the City Council appointed a citizen committee to help guide implementation of the Fire Master Plan. The citizen committee recommended that a training center land purchase be included in the proposed "public safety sales tax," which was approved by voters in November 1997.

During the period from 1998 to the year 2000, the Fire Department explored alternative sites; in particular three available other sites to relocate the fire training center were explored before settling on the Valmont Butte site. In April 2000, the Boulder Regional Fire Training Center Board of Directors proposed a countywide sales tax to the County Commissioners to fund the construction of three fire-training facilities in Boulder County.

The Boulder City Council approved the purchase of land at the Valmont Butte site, including a portion for a fire training center at their August 15, 2000 meeting. In April of

2001, the County Commissioners accepted the fire-training proposal and authorized a ballot measure to fund three (3) fire-training centers strategically located throughout the County. This measure was approved by the voters in November 2001.

During the period 2001 to 2004, asbestos was removed from the historic mill buildings and the mill site secured, tenants were moved, a fence was erected around the mill buildings, a gate was installed off 63rd Street, the utilities were turned off, and the CEAP process was initiated.

The fire training facility is estimated to cost approximately \$5 million for project design and construction.

Biosolids Recycling Center

From 1968 to 1980, the solids removed or generated at the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) were lime-stabilized and landfilled. In 1980 the WWTP was expanded to include anaerobic digestion facilities. Two anaerobic digesters were constructed to provide more efficient pathogen reduction, which replaced the lime stabilization process. The City began land application of Class B biosolids in Boulder County upon completion of the digesters. (Class B is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designation that requires that biosolids be biologically treated at or above 95 degrees Fahrenheit for a minimum of 15 days to greatly reduce pathogens and break down and stabilize the Material. Class B biosolids can then be used as a fertilizer and soil amendment on agricultural lands).

In 1993, Utilities and Open Space completed a screening of existing Open Space land to determine if biosolids recycling was feasible on several parcels. Additionally, Utilities completed a screenings study of Boulder County land to determine acceptable locations for possible land purchase. Lastly, discussions with Boulder County Open Space were initiated to see if there was interest in a joint purchase.

In 1994, Utilities purchased 160 acres at 95th Street and Lookout Road. After purchasing this property, the City considered a large scale property acquisition program which would involve the purchase of various properties (1,400-1,600 acres) located between Lookout and Mineral Road, and between 79th Street and Hwy 287.

A CEAP was completed in 1994. The CEAP recommended that staff continue to purchase Boulder County property for biosolids application. The Utilities Advisory Board (what is now WRAB) felt that the CEAP was incomplete and that additional analysis was required. City Council, however, confirmed the direction of purchasing additional property for land application and directed staff to look at other approaches for biosolids recycling. City Council's request to research other recycling approaches was what brought about the 1996 Biosolids Management Study noted below.

In 1995, the city began trucking biosolids to eastern Adams County for agricultural (land) application. In 1996, the City of Boulder hired RTW Engineers to complete a Biosolids Management Study. This study evaluated ten (10) Class A stabilization

alternatives. (Class A biosolids are provided additional treatment beyond the Class B requirements, further breaking down the organic material and destroying pathogens. In the compost process, Class B biosolids are mixed with wood chips, aerated, and allowed to compost for several weeks. The finished compost can be used on home gardens, lawns, and parks).

The two preferred Class A management alternatives selected by City staff, with input from a Citizen Study Review Group, were: 1) a city-owned and operated composting facility, or 2) a privately-owned and operated windrow composting facility.

During 1998 and 1999, the city's Public Works and Environmental Affairs departments began working with Western Disposal Services to address solid waste and yard waste disposal through a jointly owned and operated composting facility. The City and Western Disposal began to identify potential sites for such a composting facility. The Valmont Butte Corporation, owner of the Valmont Butte Site, approached the City and Western Disposal regarding a possible sale of the property. The City and Western Disposal agreed to not compete against each other in the purchase of the property.

In 2000, the city purchased the 102-acre land parcel from the Valmont Butte Corporation as a joint purchase of Utilities, Fire and Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) for \$2,575,000. The land purchase was approved by City Council on August 15, 2000. Western Disposal may play a role in the future as a supplier of yard waste or woodchips to the facility, but does not have a property interest in the Valmont Butte site.

In 2002, the City of Boulder hired RTW Engineers to provide the studies, analysis and design for using the Valmont Butte Site to accommodate a Biosolids Recycling Center. In 2003, Public Works/Utilities completed several project tasks including an alternatives analysis, which culminated in a Preliminary Design Report. Upon completion of the Preliminary Design Report, staff conducted public meetings in October and November in an effort to reach out to the local community to gather community input and to better understand the community's concerns. Staff presented updates to the Water Resources Advisory Board in August and December.

The biosolids recycling center is estimated to cost \$20 million for project design and construction, including the cost of a pipeline from the wastewater treatment plant.